

given to factors in such decisions) do not bind the NDRB in its review of subsequent cases because no two cases present the same issues of equity.

(d) The following applies to applicants who received less than fully honorable administrative discharges because of their civilian misconduct while in an inactive duty status in a reserve component and who were discharged or had their discharge reviewed on or after April 20, 1971: the NDRB shall either recharacterize the discharge to Honorable without any additional proceedings or additional proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the Court's Order of December 3, 1981, in *Wood v. Secretary of Defense* to determine whether proper grounds exist for the issuance of a less than honorable discharge, taking into account that:

(1) An other than honorable (formerly undesirable) discharge for an inactive duty reservist can only be based upon civilian misconduct found to have affected directly the performance of military duties;

(2) A general discharge for an inactive duty reservist can only be based upon civilian misconduct found to have had an adverse impact on the overall effectiveness of the military, including military morale and efficiency.

§ 724.903 Equity of the discharge.

A discharge shall be deemed to be equitable unless:

(a) In the course of a discharge review, it is determined that the policies and procedures under which the applicant was discharged differ in material respects from policies and procedures currently applicable on a service-wide basis to discharges of the type under consideration, provided that:

(1) Current policies or procedures represent a substantial enhancement of the rights afforded a respondent in such proceedings; and

(2) There is substantial doubt that the applicant would have received the same discharge, if relevant current policies and procedures had been available to the applicant at the time of the discharge proceedings under consideration.

(b) At the time of issuance, the discharge was inconsistent with standards

of discipline in the military service of which the applicant was a member.

(c) In the course of a discharge review, it is determined that relief is warranted based upon consideration of the applicant's service record and other evidence presented to the NDRB viewed in conjunction with the factors listed in this paragraph and the regulations under which the applicant was discharged, even though the discharge was determined to have been otherwise equitable and proper at the time of issuance. Areas of consideration include, but are not limited to:

(1) Quality of service, as evidenced by factors such as:

(i) Service history, including date of enlistment, period of enlistment, highest rank achieved, conduct and proficiency ratings (numerical and narrative);

(ii) Awards and decorations;

(iii) Letters of commendation or reprimand;

(iv) Combat service;

(v) Wounds received in action;

(vi) Records of promotions and demotions;

(vii) Level of responsibility at which the applicant served;

(viii) Other acts of merit that may not have resulted in formal recognition through an award or commendation;

(ix) Length of service during the service period which is the subject of the discharge review;

(x) Prior military service and type of discharge received or outstanding post service conduct to the extent that such matters provide a basis for a more thorough understanding of the performance of the applicant during the period of service which is the subject of the discharge review;

(xi) Convictions by court-martial;

(xii) Records of nonjudicial punishment;

(xiii) Convictions by civil authorities while a member of the service, reflected in the discharge proceedings or otherwise noted in the service records;

(xiv) Records of periods of unauthorized absence;

(xv) Records relating to a discharge in lieu of court-martial.

(2) Capability to serve, as evidenced by factors such as:

(i) *Total capabilities.* This includes an evaluation of matters such as age, educational level, and aptitude scores. Consideration may also be given as to whether the individual met normal military standards of acceptability for military service and similar indicators of an individual's ability to serve satisfactorily, as well as ability to adjust to military service.

(ii) *Family and personal problems.* This includes matters in extenuation or mitigation of the reason for discharge that may have affected the applicant's ability to serve satisfactorily.

(iii) *Arbitrary or capricious actions.* This includes actions by individuals in authority which constitute a clear abuse of such authority and that, although not amounting to prejudicial error, may have contributed to the decision to discharge the individual or unduly influence the characterization of service.

(iv) *Discrimination.* This includes unauthorized acts as documented by records or other evidence.

APPENDIX A TO PART 724—POLICY STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE—ADDRESSING CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF DISCHARGES

Secretary of Defense memorandum of August 13, 1971, to the Secretaries of the Military Departments, The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Subject: Review of Discharges Under Other Than Honorable Conditions Issued to Drug Users:

"Consistent with Department of Defense Directive 1300.11, October 23, 1970, and my memorandum of July 7, 1971, concerning rehabilitation and treatment of drug users, administrative discharges under other than honorable conditions issued solely on the basis of personal use of drugs or possession of drugs for the purpose of such use will be reviewed for recharacterization.

"Accordingly, each Secretary of a Military Department, acting through his Discharge Review Board, will consider applications for such review from former service members. Each Secretary is authorized to issue a discharge under honorable conditions upon establishment of facts consistent with this policy. Former service members will be notified of the results of the review. The Veterans' Administration will also be notified of the names of former service members whose discharges are recharacterized.

"The statute of limitations for review of discharges within the scope of this policy

will be in accordance with 10 United States Code 1553.

"This policy shall apply to those service members whose cases are finalized or in process on or before July 7, 1971".

Secretary of Defense memorandum of April 28, 1972, to Secretaries of the Military Departments, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Subject: Review of Punitive Discharges Issued to Drug Users:

"Reference is made to Secretary Packard's memorandum of July 7, 1971, concerning rehabilitation and treatment of drug users, and my memorandum of August 13, 1971, subject: 'Review of Discharges Under Other Than Honorable Conditions Issued to Drug Users.'

"My August 13, 1971 memorandum established the current Departmental policy that administrative discharges under other than honorable conditions issued solely on the basis of personal use of drugs or possession of drugs for the purpose of such use will be reviewed for recharacterization to under honorable conditions.

"It is my desire that this policy be expanded to include punitive discharges and dismissals resulting from approved sentences of courts-martial issued solely for conviction of personal use of drugs or possession of drugs for the purpose of such use.

"Review and recharacterization are to be effected, upon the application of former service members, utilizing the procedures and authority set forth in Title 10, United States Code, sections 874(b), 1552 and 1553.

"This policy is applicable only to discharges which have been executed on or before July 7, 1971, or issued as a result of a case in process on or before July 7, 1971.

"Former service members requesting a review will be notified of the results of the review. The Veterans' Administration will also be notified of the names of former service members whose discharges are recharacterized."

APPENDIX B TO PART 724—OATH OR AFFIRMATION TO BE ADMINISTERED TO DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS

Prior to undertaking duties as a Board member, each person assigned to such duties in the precept of the Board shall execute the following oath or affirmation which shall continue in effect throughout service with the Board.

Oath/Affirmation

I, ———, do swear or affirm that I will faithfully and impartially perform all the duties incumbent upon me as a member of the Naval Discharge Review Board; that I will fully and objectively inquire into and examine all cases coming before me; that I will, without regard to the status of the individual in any case, render my individual

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judgment according to the facts, my conscience and the law and regulations applicable to review of naval discharges, so help me God.

APPENDIX C TO PART 724—SAMPLES OF FORMATS EMPLOYED BY THE NAVAL DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD

Attachment	Form	Title
1	Letter	En Block Notification of Decision to Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command (No Change).
2do	En Block Notification of Decision to Commander, Naval Military Personnel Command (Change).
3do	En Block Notification of Decision to Commandant, Marine Corps (No Change).
4do	En Block Notification of Decision to Commandant, Marine Corps (Change).

NOTE: The Forms appearing in appendix C are not carried in the Code of Federal Regulations.

APPENDIX D TO PART 724—VETERANS' BENEFITS

91 Stat. 1106
Pub. L. 95-126, Oct. 8, 1977
95th Congress

An Act

To deny entitlement to veterans' benefits to certain persons who would otherwise become so entitled solely by virtue of the administrative upgrading under temporarily revised standards of other than honorable discharges from service during the Vietnam era; to require case-by-case review under uniform, historically consistent, generally applicable standards and procedures prior to the award of veterans' benefits to persons administratively discharged under other than honorable conditions from active military, naval, or air service; and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That (a) section 3103 of Title 38, United States Code, is amended by—

(1) Inserting "or on the basis of an absence without authority from active duty for a continuous period of at least one hundred and eighty days if such person was discharged under conditions other than honorable unless such person demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Administrator that there are compelling circumstances to warrant such prolonged unauthorized absence." after "deserter," in subsection (a), and by inserting a comma and "notwithstanding any action subsequent to the date of such discharge by a board established pursuant to section 1553

of title 10" before the period at the end of such subsection; and

(2) Adding at the end of such section the following new subsection:

"(e)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, (A) no benefits under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration shall be provided, as a result of a change in or new issuance of a discharge under section 1553 of title 10, except upon a case-by-case review by the board of review concerned, subject to review by the Secretary concerned, under such section, of all the evidence and factors in each case under published uniform standard (which shall be historically consistent with criteria for determining honorable service and shall not include any criterion for automatically granting or denying such change or issuance) and procedures generally applicable to all persons administratively discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service under other than honorable conditions; and (B) any such person shall be afforded an opportunity to apply for such review under such section 1553 for a period of time terminating not less than one year after the date on which such uniform standards and procedures are promulgated and published.

"(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

"(A) No person discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service under other than honorable conditions who has been awarded a general or honorable discharge under revised standards for the review of discharges, (i) as implemented by the President's directive of January 19, 1977, initiating further action with respect to the President's Proclamation 4313 of September 16, 1974, (ii) as implemented on or after April 5, 1977, under the Department of Defense's special discharge review program, or (iii) as implemented subsequent to April 5, 1977, and not made applicable to all persons administratively discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service under other than honorable conditions, shall be entitled to benefits under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration except upon a determination, based on a case-by-case review, under standards (meeting the requirements of paragraph (1) of this subsection) applied by the board of review concerned under section 1553 of title 10, subject to review by the Secretary concerned, that such person would be awarded an upgraded discharge under such standards;

"(B) Such determination shall be made by such board, (i) on an expedited basis after notification by the Veterans' Administration to the Secretary concerned that such person has received, is in receipt of, or has applied for such benefits or after a written request is made by such person or such determination, (ii) on its own initiative within one year after the date of enactment of this paragraph

in any case where a general or honorable discharge has been awarded on or prior to the date of enactment of this paragraph under revised standards referred to in clause (A) (i), (ii), or (iii) of this paragraph, or (iii) on its own initiative at the time a general or honorable discharge is so awarded in any case where a general or honorable discharge is awarded after such enactment date.

"If such board makes a preliminary determination that such person would not have been awarded an upgraded discharge under standards meeting the requirements of paragraph (1) of this subsection, such person shall be entitled to an appearance before the board, as provided for in section 1553(c) of title 10, prior to a final determination on such question and shall be given written notice by the board of such preliminary determination and of his or her right to such appearance. The Administrator shall, as soon as administratively feasible, notify the appropriate board of review of the receipt of benefits under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration, or the application for such benefits, by any person awarded an upgraded discharge under revised standards referred to in clause (A) (i), (ii), or (iii) of this paragraph with respect to whom a favorable determination has not been made under this paragraph."

(b)(1) The Secretary of Defense shall fully inform each person awarded a general or honorable discharge under revised standards for the review of discharges referred to in section 3103(e)(2)(A) (i), (ii), or (iii) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(2) of this section of his or her right to obtain an expedited determination under section 3103(e)(2)(B)(i) of such title and of the implications of the provisions of this Act for each such person.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Defense shall inform each person who applies to a board of review under section 1553 of title 10, United States Code, and who appears to have been discharged under circumstances which might constitute a bar to benefits under section 3103(a), of title 38, United States Code, (A) that such person might possibly be administratively found to be entitled to benefits under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration only through the action of a board for the correction of military records under section 1552 of such title 10 or the action of the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs under section 3103 of such title 38, and (B) of the procedures for making application to such section 1552 board for such purpose and to the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs for such purpose (including the right to proceed concurrently under such sections 3103, 1552 and 1553).

Section 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs shall provide the type of health care

and related benefits authorized to be provided under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for any disability incurred or aggravated during active military, naval, or air service in line of duty by a person other than a person barred from receiving benefits by section 3103(a) of such title, but shall not provide such health care and related benefits pursuant to this section for any disability incurred or aggravated during a period of service from which such person was discharged by reason of a bad conduct discharge.

Section 3. Paragraph (18) of section 101 of Title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(18) The term 'discharge or release' includes, (A) retirement from the active military, naval, or air service, and (B) the satisfactory completion of the period of active military, naval, or air service for which a person was obligated at the time of entry into such service in the case of a person who, due to enlistment or reenlistment, was not awarded a discharge or release from such period of service at the time of such completion thereof and who, at such time, would otherwise have been eligible for the award of a discharge or release under conditions other than dishonorable."

Section 4. In promulgating, or making any revisions of or amendments to, regulations governing the standards and procedures by which the Veterans' Administration determines whether a person was discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service under conditions other than dishonorable, the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs shall, in keeping with the spirit and intent of this Act, not promulgate any such regulations or revise or amend any such regulations for the purpose of, or having the effect of, (1) providing any unique or special advantage to veterans awarded general or honorable discharges under revised standards for the review of discharges described in section 3103(e)(2)(A) (i), (ii), or (iii) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 1(a)(2) of this Act, or (2) otherwise making any special distinction between such veterans and other veterans.

Section 5. This Act shall become effective on the date of its enactment, except that—

(1) Section 2 shall become effective on October 1, 1977, or on such enactment date, whichever is later; and

(2) The amendments made by section 1(a) shall apply retroactively to deny benefits under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration, except that, notwithstanding any other provision of law.

(A) With respect to any person who, on such enactment date is receiving benefits under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration, (i) such benefits shall not be terminated under paragraph (2) of section 3103(e) of title 38, United States Code, as

added by section 1(a)(2) of this Act, until, (I) the day on which a final determination not favorable to the person concerned is made on an expedited basis under paragraph (2) of such section 3103(e), (II) the day following the expiration of ninety days after a preliminary determination not favorable to such person is made under such paragraph, or (III) the day following the expiration of one hundred and eighty days after such enactment date, whichever day is the earliest, and (ii) the United States shall not make any claim to recover the value of any benefits provided to such person prior to such earliest day;

(B) With respect to any person awarded a general or honorable discharge under revised standards for the review of discharges referred to in clause (A) (i), (ii), or (iii) of such paragraph who has been provided any such benefits prior to such enactment date, the United States shall not make any claim to recover the value of any benefits so provided; and

(C) The amendments made by clause (1) of section 1(a) shall apply, (i) retroactively only to persons awarded general or honorable discharges under such revised standards and to persons who, prior to the date of enactment of this Act, had not attained general eligibility to such benefits by virtue of (I) a change in or new issuance of a discharge under section 1553 of title 10, United States Code, or (II) any other provision of law, and (ii) prospectively (on and after such enactment date) to all other persons.

PART 725—RELEASE OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION FOR LITIGATION PURPOSES AND TESTIMONY BY DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY PERSONNEL

Sec.

725.1 Purpose.

725.2 Policy.

725.3 Authority to act.

725.4 Definitions.

725.5 Applicability.

725.6 Authority to determine and respond.

725.7 Contents of a proper request or demand.

725.8 Considerations in determining to grant or deny a request.

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725.11 Fees.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301; 10 U.S.C. 113, 5013; 31 U.S.C. 9701 and 32 CFR part 97.

SOURCE: 57 FR 2463, Jan. 22, 1992, unless otherwise noted.

§ 725.1 Purpose.

This instruction implements 32 CFR part 97 regarding the release of official Department of the Navy (DON) information and provision of testimony by DON personnel for litigation purposes, and prescribes conduct of DON personnel in response to a litigation request or demand. It restates the information contained in Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5820.8A of 27 August 1991¹, and is intended to conform in all respects with the requirements of that instruction.

§ 725.2 Policy.

(a) It is DON policy that official factual information, both testimonial and documentary, should be made reasonably available for use in Federal courts, state courts, foreign courts, and other governmental proceedings unless that information is classified, privileged, or otherwise protected from public disclosure.

(b) DON personnel, as defined in § 725.4(b), however, shall not provide such official information, testimony, or documents, submit to interview, or permit a view or visit, without the authorization required by this part.

(c) DON personnel shall not provide, with or without compensation, opinion or expert testimony concerning official DON or Department of Defense (DOD) information, subjects, personnel, or activities, except on behalf of the United States or a party represented by the Department of Justice, or with the written special authorization required by this part.

(d) Section 725.2(b) and (c) constitute a regulatory general order, applicable to all DON personnel individually, and need no further implementation. A violation of those provisions is punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for military personnel and is the basis for appropriate administrative procedures with respect to civilian employees. Moreover, violations of this instruction by DON personnel may, under certain circumstances, be actionable under 18 U.S.C. 207.

¹ Copies may be obtained, if needed, from the Naval Publications and Forms Directorate, Attn: Code 301, 5801 Tabor Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19120-5099.